

*The*  
LIVING  
ROOM



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VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

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WELCOME!

Dear volunteer,

Welcome to *The Living Room* team! We are delighted to have you on the team and hope that you will enjoy volunteering at *The Living Room*.

We could not run *The Living Room* without you, you are a crucial part of the team. Thank you for making the commitment and for everything you are bringing to the role.

*The Living Room* hopes to be a place of welcome and mutual respect and warmth for everyone who comes. We need you to help us make this a reality.

Please talk to us about your experience of being on the team. If you see things going well, or feel there are things which could be improved, or if there are ways we could use your skills then please let us know, we would love to hear from you.

Thanks you and welcome!

***The Living Room* Management committee**

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## Vision and Mission

### Vision:

A town where nobody has to sleep rough on the streets.

### Mission:

To open Church halls during the winter months, offering shelter, hospitality, and hope to people sleeping rough.

### Culture and Ethos:

*The Living Room* believes that every person, regardless of their circumstances, has great value and significance. Consequently *The Living Room* seeks to foster a culture and atmosphere of welcome and mutual respect and warmth. We believe that discrimination on any ground whatsoever is unacceptable. The aim of *The Living Room* is, therefore, to provide genuine equality of opportunity for any volunteer or visitor who may use our service.

### Aims:

- To enable people sleeping rough to have shelter, warmth, and hospitality for some nights every week during the winter months
- To improve outcomes for people sleeping rough who want to move on to permanent accommodation.

### Objectives:

- To provide safe shelter in churches for people otherwise sleeping rough
- To provide a simple hot meal and hospitality
- To assist and support guests to move on as and when appropriate
- To work closely with other agencies supporting people who are homeless
- To encourage churches and agencies to work together
- To be an example in the community, drawing volunteers from all areas of society.

### **Activities:**

- Two churches to offer a safe space, meal and hospitality to the homeless one night a week over the winter period
- To liaise closely with a range of agencies in order to ensure that visitors have links will which support them to move forwards in their lives
- To recruit and train an appropriate number of volunteers from all areas of the community.
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### **Visitors**

*The Living Room* is open to all, except that homelessness is a condition for admission, and we should be satisfied that a person's needs are not too great for us to manage safely. We do not discriminate against any guest on grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or cultural origins, religion, marital status, disability, sexual orientation or age. If prioritisation is needed due to restrictions on numbers this will be based on need. *The Living Room* will seek to ensure that there is no discrimination in service provision and delivery. All visitors will be treated with dignity. Moreover, we do not accept our visitors encountering any such discrimination whilst in our care, whether from volunteers or other visitors. We will not tolerate discrimination or false allegations.

### **Volunteers**

All volunteers will be treated with dignity and respect by *The Living Room* team. However, *The Living Room* recognises that not all visitors will treat volunteers in a similar fashion. In a situation where a guest behaves badly or inappropriately, volunteers are asked to be very patient and compassionate whilst ensuring that the appropriate guidelines are followed and personal safety maintained. Any incident should be recorded, and *The Living Room* will deal with any verbal or physical abuse with appropriate measures.

### **General Information**

- *The Living Room* will operate over the winter months.

- *The Living Room* is not a drop in where anybody can just turn up. Our Project Co-ordinator will operate a booking system in liaison with local agencies. So anybody wishing to book a bed will need to make contact via one telephone number / email address.
- *The Living Room* will provide a safe, warm space for up to 10 visitors a night. There will be beds available so that these visitors can sleep if they choose to. However they can also choose to sit and engage in quiet activities if preferred.

## Volunteering at *The Living Room*

### Who can volunteer?

Anyone over 18 is welcome to apply to volunteer. Whether you have people skills or practical skills, there could be a role for you. We take up references and a DBS check for all volunteers working directly with guests. We also carry out an informal interview.

### Personal Qualities we look for in a good volunteer

- A heart for the vulnerable, poor and needy and a willingness to be challenged and changed.
- Attendance at training provided by *The Living Room* at the earliest opportunity before working with guests and regularly throughout volunteering with *The Living Room*.
- Willingness to follow instructions from the shift leader, and work as part of a team.
- Ability to respond calmly but quickly in an emergency.
- Judgement of when to call for help.
- Familiarity with and ability to work within *The Living Room* policies and guidelines, especially regarding Health & Safety procedures.
- Knowledge of basic first aid would be useful.
- Some knowledge and sensitivity to issues relating to homelessness, including mental health issues, drug and alcohol abuse. (Training provided)
- A willingness to work within our ethos, and to respect others regardless of differences in faith or background.
- *The Living Room* is hosted in church buildings and the churches offering this accommodation are motivated by their desire to demonstrate the love of Jesus in our community. However, you do not have to be a Christian to volunteer. We have an opportunity for prayer at the beginning of each evening, but we respect those who would rather not participate.

### **What Can You Expect from Us?**

- A full induction, support and any training necessary for your volunteer role.
- To be treated in line with *The Living Room* Equal Opportunities policy.
- To provide and maintain, as far as is reasonably practical, safe and healthy working conditions, equipment and systems to enable you to carry out your role as a volunteer.
- That we listen and respond to queries, problems and feedback. This is a key part of the role of the Project Coordinator who is there to support all volunteers.

## **Expectations of Volunteers**

The following directions are for your personal safety and the well-being of our guests, as well as the smooth running of our activities. Most are common sense, but please read them carefully and ensure you are able to follow them. If you have any questions, please speak to a member of staff or the Project Coordinator.

These fall into four areas:

- Working as a team
- Being safe
- Respecting others
- Boundaries

### **Working as a team**

- Be punctual, and let someone know as soon as possible if you are going to be late or cannot make your shift.
- If it is before the day, send a message to the Project Co-ordinator. They will then try to organise a replacement.
- Work as a team and support the person in charge. Do not challenge their decisions in front of other volunteers or guests. If you have concerns about a situation or decision, speak to them privately at an appropriate moment.
- Look after equipment used for the session, especially the logbook which is a major record of our work.
- Familiarise yourself with the guest rules and be vigilant to the behaviour of the guests. Let the person in charge know if you suspect that someone is not adhering to the rules.

## PERSONAL SAFETY

Volunteers should be made aware of and follow these guidelines.

- Check the identity of each visitor arriving at the door by asking for their name. Do not allow anyone into *The Living Room* who is not on the list for that night.
- Never give your home phone number or home address to a client, or invite a client into your home
- Do not put yourself in a position where you or a fellow volunteer are on your own with a volunteer.
- Do not wear or bring valuables with you.
- Do not give or lend money to clients – if you are concerned about their situation, refer them to the shift leader
- If dealing with left behind property, don't put your hand into bags, pockets etc. Tip the contents out onto a flat surface so that you can see what you are handling.
- Volunteers should act safely and not put themselves or other volunteers or clients in any danger. If you feel intimidated at any time during the shift, inform the Shift Leader. Please take directions at all times from them, especially with regard to matters of personal safety.
- Make sure you know the layout of the premises, especially the emergency exits, and any areas that are out of bounds to guests.
- Please wear appropriate and sensible clothing.
- Please ensure that you have arranged your own travel to and from *The Living Room* and that someone else knows your plans. If you feel uncomfortable walking back to your car after a session, please ask another volunteer to walk with you.

## Respecting Others

- Treat guests equally. This can be hard since some are easier to like than others. However, guests swiftly pick up and resent if others are being favoured.

- Treat guests with respect.
- Be friendly and make guests feel welcome. This should not, however, extend to hugging guests, which can easily be misinterpreted and can be uncomfortable for many people.
- When speaking to guests it is best not to make promises; people can feel very let down by a promise not kept. Our organisation needs to build trust in order to be effective in finding appropriate help for guests. Broken promises can undermine this work.
- When talking to guests it is important not to push for information. Please acknowledge that some guests may feel hurt or let down by some experiences and may not wish to talk about them. Others will like nothing better than to tell you their story. Please respect the guest's confidentiality and do not discuss or comment on anything relating to the guests or other volunteers; even positive comments can so easily be misunderstood.
- Although confidentiality is important for building trust, it is not about keeping secrets and this should be made clear to guests. If at any time you feel that the person poses a threat to themselves or to another person or to the safety of the *The Living Room* you should advise the guest that you will need to let your Project Co-ordinator / shift leader know immediately.

## Boundaries

- Visitors and volunteers should be known by first names only as far as possible.
- **Do not** give or lend money to guests.
- **Do not give out personal information** especially address, telephone number or e-mail address.
- Arrangements should not be made to meet with visitors outside of activities arranged by *The Living Room*.
- Do not seek out personal relationships with current or recent visitors. Unsurprisingly, many of them have complex needs and will be looking for emotional reassurance as well as practical help, so it is imperative that volunteers keep a professional distance.

- Do not offer, or accept requests for, lifts home from events by guests.
- The use of social network sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn etc. can be a positive way of keeping in touch with friends, but can also be abused, and for this reason volunteers at *The Living Room* are expected not to make any kind of connection with visitors to the project via the internet or social media. This includes accepting friend requests, sending messages electronically, responding to messages electronically etc. Do not make contact with, or accept 'friend requests' from visitors or ex-visitors via social media platforms including (but not limited to) Facebook, Twitter etc. This is in keeping with our policy of no contact outside *The Living Room* activities and being friendly towards guests but not becoming friends. This maintains important emotional and safety boundaries for both the visitor and yourself.
- From time to time visitors may wish to give gifts to staff or volunteers. The general rule is that all gifts should be shared with the team and the guest should be told that this is the policy. All gifts should be reported and recorded in the logbook. Any gift deemed to be too expensive or in some way inappropriate should be discretely returned to the guest. Let your shift leader know.
- Similarly we do not encourage volunteers to give gifts as it can inadvertently set up an expectation of return, and it can also be interpreted as favouritism. You may become aware of a situation where a guest is in need of a particular item that you have spare. You should not feel obliged to try and meet the needs of the guests, but if you feel you would like to pass something on to them, please speak to the Project Co-ordinator. They may know more about the guest, and can let you know if it's appropriate, and if so, they can arrange for the gift to be passed anonymously, so that the guest does not then feel beholden to you. We may email out requests for donations of items where guests have specific need, (e.g. old kettles) so there are appropriate avenues through which you can give.

**We all have times when we might be tempted to question these boundaries in a specific situation. We are aware of this and ask that you discuss your**

concerns with a member of staff. But be aware that if you do infringe our boundaries, without prior discussion with a member of the management committee, we reserve the right to prevent you from volunteering with us in the future. This rule is for your own safety and for the safety of fellow volunteers and guests.

Please support other volunteers in keeping to these boundaries and personal safety directions. If you have concerns about the behaviour of another volunteer you should speak to the Volunteering Coordinator.

**Stopping Volunteering:** There may also be periods of time where you do not volunteer, but intend to volunteer again in the near future. We ask you to represent *The Living Room* well during these times also since you will still be associated with *The Living Room* in the mind of guests you may encounter. You can reckon to be free of these responsibilities once you indicate to the Project Coordinator that you are no longer volunteering and have no intention of volunteering again in the foreseeable future. If at any point you feel that you are not able to continue volunteering with us, please let the Project Coordinator know as soon as possible.

## **Feedback**

Both guest and volunteers may wish to give feedback about their experience of *The Living Room* or feel the need to report a specific incident that has affected them (separate to those required to be reported in the log book) that may need to be followed up by a member of staff. The Project Coordinator is available to discuss any concerns or queries you may have and to offer support.

We carry out an annual volunteer survey to gather your views on your experiences. Please do complete this, as making volunteering with *The Living Room* a satisfying and rewarding experience is very important to us.

## Procedures

### Safeguarding

Please see *The Living Room* Safeguarding policy and the Diocese of Norwich SafeHaven policy for complete information about Safeguarding.

### **Good Practice Statement**

The best defence against abuse is the strength of values incorporated in *The Living Room* culture. *The Living Room* team believe that all guests are entitled to be treated with dignity, courtesy and respect regardless of their age, race, gender or ability. Safety is embedded within good sound practice and the growing ability of guests to protect themselves, make their views known and be listened to.

### **Alerting**

Any volunteer may be alerted to the possibility of abuse. Alerting could mean that an act of abuse is witnessed, a person is saying that abuse has occurred, or suspicions are raised.

- All Volunteers are responsible for reporting concerns, disclosures or possible indications of abuse following the procedure below.
- Information about abuse must never be withheld intentionally as failure to disclose may have an influence on the future safety of an individual.
- Disclosures and concerns should not be treated as confidential.

Those working or volunteering at *The Living Room* must never promise to keep secrets for a guest and must never be alone with a guest. Anything heard or seen which causes concern should in the first instance be reported to the Shift leader who in liaison with the Management Committee will consider referring information on to the most appropriate agency.

If there is a suspicion or allegation of mistreatment of a vulnerable adult:

- Listen carefully to what is being said without asking leading questions or making personal comment.

- Make detailed notes on the conversation, sign and date it.
- Inform the Named Person who must report the discussion to the Bishop's Adviser for Safeguarding (Sue Brice, 07958377079); she will advise and contact other agencies as appropriate.
- If the vulnerable adult is in immediate danger, Social Services or the Police should be contacted before the Bishop's Adviser.  
Norfolk Social Services / MASH: **0344 800 8020**  
Norfolk Police **0845 4564567**
- **IN AN EMERGENCY ALWAYS CALL 999**

**Under no circumstances should anyone involved in The Living Room take it upon themselves to investigate the situation. If an allegation has been made, it must not be discussed with the person who is being accused.**

### **Guidelines for Data Protection**

- Written documents about visitors will be kept locked away when not in use.
- Written documents about visitors will not be left in sight of other visitors or people who don't have a need to see them (as detailed above)
- Handovers and information sharing will be carried out in private, never in the presence of visitors.
- Accurate records will be kept
- If disclosures are made which are safeguarding related, the Adult Safeguarding policy should be followed.
- No photographs, video or audio recording of a visitor should be taken without their explicit consent using a consent form.
- Photographs, videos and audio recording should not be captured by volunteers without prior consent from the Project Co-ordinator.
- Any photographs, videos or audio recordings made should be transferred to the Project Co-ordinator who will store them securely. They should be deleted from the original recording equipment (e.g. phone, video camera, camera etc.)

### **Drug and Alcohol Guidelines**

- Drinking alcohol whilst on the Living Room premises is not allowed by visitors or volunteers.
- Alcohol or controlled drugs must not be carried onto the premises by any visitor or volunteer.
- Visitors will be allowed to leave the building to smoke at set times up until 11.00 p.m. After this no visitors will be allowed to leave the building.

**The safety of staff is paramount. No staff member should place himself or herself at risk. All staff should prioritise personal safety issues, conduct risk assessments and work within the legal framework when working within premises or non-centre based and consult their line managers.**

- If a guest arrives under the influence of alcohol **and** appears aggressive or threatening then they will be asked to leave. It may be necessary to inform the police of this decision.
- If guests are found drinking on the premises, they may be asked to leave the shelter.
- If guests are found taking drugs on the premises it should be discussed with the person concerned immediately, unless there are real concerns about the personal safety of staff or members of the local community.
- Where this is not the case the behaviour should be discussed in a non-confrontational manner as the earliest available opportunity. Two members of *The Living Room* team should be present.
- The person should be asked to cease the activity immediately. If they do so, then the organisation's obligations under section 8 have been discharged.
- Staff should proceed by informing the service user that they are acting illegally (see the Misuse of Drugs Act (1971)), and staff will highlight the legal risks that this carries for the Service User.
- Staff will inform their line manager at the earliest opportunity of the breaches of drug policy and record the incident and responses initiated.

- Anyone found dealing drugs will be asked to leave the shelter.
- Volunteers who suspect that someone is violating these policies must complete a 'Suspicion of Drug or Alcohol Use' form . This way volunteers the following night can be aware. Volunteers should not 'police' the Night Shelter, but should not be negligent.
- Volunteers arriving to their shift under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be asked to leave and another volunteer will be called to replace them.
- Volunteers found consuming alcohol whilst on shift will be asked to leave and a replacement volunteer will be called. These actions will jeopardise future volunteer placements.

## **Health and Safety**

### **Slips, Trips and Falls**

- Accidents or near-misses should be reported on an incident-reporting form and reviewed by the Project Co-ordinator / Management Committee as soon as possible.
- Spillage should be cleaned up promptly by whoever sees it
- Any damaged flooring should be reported to a representative of the premises.
- A clear, wide passageway to the entrance hall and fire escape should be maintained at all times
- Items on the floor where someone could trip over them should be moved to a safe place
- Torches will be available for visitors and volunteers to use to make their way round the room in the dark.

### **Fire Safety**

- No smoking is allowed inside the venues. Visitors are allowed to smoke outside the building until the doors are closed.
- Fire evacuation procedures for each of the venues will be available and explained to volunteers before their first shift, including location of fire exits and evacuation procedures.
- Volunteers and visitors need to be signed in at the beginning of each shift in order to have a clear record of who is present in the building.
- All fire exits will be clearly marked and clear from obstruction
- In the case of a fire being identified, the alarm will be raised immediately.
- If smoke alarms are present they will be regularly checked.

### **Emergency Procedure**

- A list of emergency contacts will be held at each venue and available to all volunteers.
- The shift leader will usually be responsible for deciding the best course of action in an emergency.
- If there is a significant risk to health or safety, 999 should be rung.

### **Evacuation Procedure**

- An evacuation / fire warden will be nominated for each shift
- The evacuation warden will put on a fluorescent jacket as soon as the need for evacuation is identified
- The evacuation warden is responsible for collecting the register of names for those who are present at *The Living Room* that night.
- The evacuation warden will check those present at the evacuation meeting point against the register of those in attendance at *The Living Room* that night.

### **First Aid**

- There should be a qualified First Aider present at each shift.
- Every venue will have a First Aid box and volunteers will be made aware of its location.
- Whenever possible, dealing with medical issues which arise should be led by the First Aider in discussion with the shift leader.
- If a medical issue arises which is beyond the remit of the First Aider but is not a medical emergency then an out of hours doctor should be contacted.
- Any incidents requiring First Aid will be documented on an incident form.
- In a medical emergency an ambulance should be called for.

### **Disposing of sharps and drug paraphernalia**

Needles can cause injuries. Used needles can carry blood-borne viruses that may be passed on to other people.

Viruses that can be passed on through contact with needles include:

HIV

hepatitis B

hepatitis C

Do not touch a used needle unless absolutely necessary to make the area safe for yourself and other people.

If it is necessary to handle a needle or other drug paraphernalia, it is essential to follow this procedure:

- Suitable tools, such as tongs, dustpans and brushes, should be used to move used needles wherever possible;
- Only if this is not possible should gloved hands be used;
- Gloves should always be worn when dealing with discarded sharps, even when using tools – there is always the possibility of accidental hand contact with the needle whilst using the tools;
- Gloves should afford a suitable level of protection from possible puncture from the needle; and
- Gloves are unlikely to offer 100% protection, and employees should be made aware of this.
- In all cases, appropriate sharps containers should be in place and ready to receive needles before any moving or handling begins.
- Sharps and drugs paraphernalia must be placed in the designated yellow bin. You shouldn't put used needles or other sharps in a general refuse bin or in a container that's no longer needed, such as a drinks can or bottle.
- Never attempt to take anything out of the sharps bin.

Only fill the bin up to where it says "Do not fill above this line". Once it has reached this level, collection must be organised. While your sharps bin is in use or waiting to be collected, keep it in a safe place so it's not a risk to other people and is out of the reach of children.

Whenever handling of a needle or other drug paraphernalia occurs an incident form must be completed and passed on to the Project Co-ordinator / Management Committee.

### **Sharps Injury Procedure**

If you pierce or puncture your skin with a used needle, follow this first aid advice immediately:

- encourage the wound to bleed, ideally by holding it under running water
- wash the wound using running water and plenty of soap
- don't scrub the wound while you're washing it
- don't suck the wound
- dry the wound and cover it with a waterproof plaster or dressing

You should also seek urgent medical advice - go to the nearest accident and emergency (A&E) department.

An incident form must always be completed and passed on to the Project Co-ordinator / Management Committee

### **Violence and aggression**

*The Living Room* acknowledges the responsibility of the committee and various churches to provide direction and support to volunteers. In addition, all volunteers have an individual responsibility never to put themselves, their colleagues, clients or members of the public at unnecessary risk. These procedures should be viewed within the context of that shared responsibility.

### **Principles**

- Every effort will be made to diffuse any potentially violent situation
- Physical violence will not be tolerated amongst guests or volunteers
- Implied violence and threatening behaviour will not be tolerated
- The use or threatened use of any weapon will not be tolerated

### **General guidelines**

- It is natural to be frightened of violence, and this needs to be taken into account in the expectations of oneself or others when dealing with actual or potential violence or threatening behaviour.
- In responding to violence or potential violence, one's own safety and that of colleagues and the client group must be seen as the first consideration.
- Guidelines can never cover every eventuality. Volunteers must also draw on their experience, skills and common sense when faced with aggressive situations.
- Any guest or volunteer who uses physical violence may be banned immediately.
- Anyone who consistently provokes violence may be banned
- Anyone who consistently threatens or implies violence may be banned.
- All volunteers should co-operate in taking a consistent approach to confronting clients about unacceptable behaviour and in banning or excluding clients from the building. As far as possible, one volunteer should not be identified as the instigator of a ban – these should be presented as team

decisions, and all volunteers must actively support the decision even if they have a different opinion.

Please note that banning is a last resort for guests who do not exhibit continuous violent or harmful behaviour.

### **When a violent incident occurs**

- It is the responsibility of all volunteers to alert colleagues at the first sign of aggression and to act co-operatively to diffuse the situation.
- One or two volunteers should talk to the individual/s concerned, remaining calm, but firm, and trying to create opportunities for the client/s to back down without feeling humiliated. Where possible, the client/s should be taken aside.
- Other volunteers should remain at a reasonable distance but pay attention in case the situation escalates. Volunteers who are not directly involved with the main protagonists should attempt to keep other clients calm, and prevent them from becoming involved unless they are friends who can assist.
- In particular, one volunteer should ensure that any vulnerable people are removed from the area and if possible, potential weapons such as plates, cutlery, etc should be removed from the area.
- Space should be created to ensure that people are not crowded into a confined area. All those present should be mindful of their own and others “escape route” should it be necessary to get out of the way fast.
- One worker should be in a position to phone for police assistance should this become necessary. It may be useful to identify in advance which volunteer on your shift would have this responsibility should a situation arise.
- If an incident escalates and the client/s cannot be calmed, then volunteers should be prepared to vacate the area. Personal safety must be put before the protection of property. The police should be summoned immediately.
- In exceptional circumstances, if retreat is not possible, volunteers should take appropriate measures to defend themselves. In the unlikely event of an

attack, only force sufficient to stop the attacker and prevent injury to self, colleagues or clients should be used, but reasonable restraint is acceptable.

**When an incident has taken place:**

If an incident does occur, it is likely to be very unsettling for everyone involved in the project, whether volunteer or client.

Some things that can be done (guided by the Team Leader for the shift) include:

- Promote first aid where necessary
- Providing reassurance and helping everyone to calm down
- Recording details of the incident as quickly as possible, please include names and times. Full statements will be taken at another time. Details of the incident will be recorded on an incident form with any action taken
- Arranging for any volunteer that has been scared or hurt to leave the shift
- Arranging longer term support where necessary
- Discuss the incident and try and draw out constructive lessons for avoiding a similar incident in the future in the morning with the Project Co-ordinator
- Consider providing Guests with brief details of what happened and how it was dealt with; this is to prevent rumours and provide reassurance that incidents are dealt with effectively.
- Details of individuals who have been banned will be circulated to the next shift team, the other shelter venues and the management committee.

**The police may be called in the following instances:**

- If anyone is being threatening/violent with a weapon or is seen to be in possession of a weapon
- If there is a multiple fight which cannot be contained
- If anyone has failed to accept a ban, refuses to leave when asked and/or is persistently coming back to a shelter.
- Or any situation where volunteers feel unable to contain the situation.

### **Role of volunteers**

- Volunteers are encouraged to de-escalate any potential problems if they feel confident and safe to do so.
- Do not put yourself at risk of harm.
- If you have time, ask another volunteer to keep an eye on the situation, and inform the Team Leader if necessary.
- If you see another volunteer in a situation which may escalate, try to inform the Team Leader before trying to offer assistance. Be sensitive to the fact that joining heated discussions can be unhelpful, especially if the guest may feel that people are 'ganging up' on them.
- If any Volunteer feels uncomfortable or unsafe then it is better for them to remove themselves from the situation and then to inform the Team Leader.

### **Weapons**

- If a volunteer sees a weapon at any time on a guest they should inform the Team Leader and inform the Police. Please see Police Protocol.

## Volunteer Policy

### Recruitment

- Volunteers will recruited from a variety of backgrounds and sources. See 'Equal Opportunities' policy for more information.
- Volunteers will be requested to complete a brief application form, Confidential Declaration from and to attend for an informal interview.
- References will be taken up once a volunteer has been interviewed.
- It is a requirement that all volunteers are DBS checked – see Safeguarding Policy for more information.

### Role

- It is important that whilst volunteering for *The Living Room* that you only undertake work in relation to your role in *The Living Room* and not any other organisation you work or volunteer.
- A description of your role and responsibilities will be provided.
- The skills that volunteers bring to this role is vital in the success of *The Living Room* and ensuring that guests have the support required.
- *The Living Room* welcomes any additional support you may be able to provide using your knowledge however this should be run through the Project Co-ordinator.

### Induction and Training

- All volunteers will be expected to attend induction training, which will include:
  - An introduction to the project
  - Dealing with challenging behaviour
  - Safeguarding
  - Professional Boundaries
- Additional training may be offered including:
  - Drug and alcohol awareness
  - Mental Health awareness
  - Health and safety

Volunteers are strongly recommended to attend this training when it is offered.

## Volunteer formalities

- All volunteers will have a role description outlining what they are expected to do.
- All volunteers will sign a volunteer agreement
- All volunteers will have a named person to whom they can take concerns.
- Volunteers can have reasonable travel expenses to and from *The Living Room* and their home address reimbursed by completing an expenses form.

## Dealing with problems

- If a volunteer is dissatisfied with any action taken relating to his / her personal involvement as a volunteer at *The Living Room*, or if you have a grievance against *The Living Room* in some other respect, you should in the first instance raise this with the Project Co-ordinator, who will talk through the issue informally and look for possible solutions.
- If this does not resolve the matter, the volunteer should then put his / her complaint in writing (a grievance form is available) to the Management Committee within 28 days, accompanied by any relevant documentation. The Management Committee will make formal acknowledgement of the complaint within seven days, and meet to discuss the situation as soon as possible thereafter. You may be asked to attend such a meeting, in order to present your complaint personally or to clarify certain details of the situation that has arisen. The outcome of this meeting will normally be communicated to you in writing within seven days.
- If, after this process has been completed, you are still gravely dissatisfied with the situation, then it is advisable for you to refer your complaint to the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service \* (ACAS) for further advice.
- The Management Committee is committed to handling any problem that arises within the volunteer relationship as swiftly and equitably as possible.

## DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

If at any time the Management Committee has any concerns regarding poor practice or inappropriate behaviour in relation to a volunteer, then the following steps will be taken.

- The Project Co-ordinator / member of the Management Committee will in the first instance meet with the volunteer within 7 days to discuss the concerns.

- If this does not resolve the matter satisfactorily then the concerns will be set out in writing within 14 days of the above meeting. The volunteer will then have 28 days to respond to the concerns and will be offered the opportunity to discuss the concerns with two or more of the Management Committee, in person.
- If at the end of the 28 day period the Project Manager and Management Committee continue to have concerns then you will be asked by the Management Committee to cease your work with *The Living Room*

*Note*

If there is any allegation related to safeguarding there are no circumstances when this wouldn't be reported to the police and the Project Co-ordinator will report to the chair of *The Living Room* management committee immediately they are aware of an issue.

If any disciplinary or grievance matter arises which relates in any way to allegations involving child protection, then the police or Social Services will be contacted.

**Implementing the policy**

The management committee of *The Living Room* is responsible for the implementation of this policy and it will be reviewed annually.

**THANK YOU**

FOR BEING PART OF *The*  
LIVING  
ROOM | 

## Appendices

Appendix A

### **Suspected Drug or Alcohol Use Reporting Form**

Date:

Time:

What lead me to suspect illegal drug use:

I investigated it by:

The outcome was that:

I have reported this incident to \_\_\_\_\_ who is the

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

Action Taken (to be completed by the Project Co-ordinator)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

## **VISITOR AGREEMENT**

**We hope that you will have a peaceful and restful night at *The Living Room***

We commit ourselves to providing hospitality to you, which includes a warm evening meal, a warm bed for the night, and breakfast the following morning. If there is anything we can do to make your stay more comfortable, please ask a volunteer and they will try their best to help.

**Please arrive at *The Living Room* at 7.30pm. You will not be allowed to enter *The Living Room* if you arrive after 8.00 p.m.** Each morning breakfast will be served from 07:00am and visitors are required to leave the premises by 8.30 a.m.

The safety of our guests and volunteers is our primary concern and so we have a Community Code in place which a member of our team will discuss with you. Anyone who is unable to abide by the Community Code will receive a warning or ban from the shelter. It is not our wish to exclude anyone from *The Living Room*; however, we will take appropriate action against those who do not respect the rules.

### **Personal Information**

In general information which you give to representatives of *The Living Room* will be kept private and not shared with those outside of *The Living Room* team. However information is likely to be shared under the following circumstances:

- With any other members of *The Living Room* team, including volunteers, staff and the management group.
- It is deemed to be necessary for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of you or others present at *The Living Room* (including providing names of those staying at *The Living Room* to the local police and liaison with local services)
- Information you share suggests a serious risk to yourself or others.

- With your consent information may be passed on to other organisations where it is thought that this will improve your situation.

**Other important information**

1. Fire Safety: On your first night at *The Living Room* venue, a volunteer will show you around the facilities and please make sure you know where the fire exits and assembly points are located.
2. Valuables: You are responsible for your own property. Please take all your belongings with you when you leave. If any property is left at *The Living Room* and not claimed in 7 days after leaving *The Living Room* it will be disposed of.
3. Only volunteers are allowed into the kitchen.
4. Money: Volunteers are not permitted to lend, or give out money.

**IF YOU ARE WILLING TO AGREE WITH THE ABOVE PLEASE**

**PRINT AND SIGN YOUR NAME BELOW.**

**Name of visitor:**

**Date:**

**Signature of visitor:**

**Booked in by Project Manager:**

Appendix C

**COMMUNITY CODE**

We keep the rules to a minimum, but for everyone's comfort and safety please note the following:

**1. No Anti-Social Behaviour or Offensive Language**

At *The Living Room*, the dignity and safety of our guests and volunteers is very important to us. If there are any doubts about whether a person might be violent, aggressive or disruptive, we will not allow them into *The Living Room* even if a bed has been booked. Everyone at *The Living Room* should be treated with respect. Any kind of harassment or threatening behaviour will result in you being asked to leave. Any violence towards staff, volunteers or other visitors will always result in the Police being called.

**2. No Controlled Drugs**

At *The Living Room* we operate a 'no controlled drugs' policy. Drug usage or possession within *The Living Room* is forbidden and will result in a warning or ban. We cannot at any time take responsibility for prescription drugs.

**3. No Alcohol**

*The Living Room* is NOT a wet shelter. You cannot consume alcohol within the shelter or within the immediate locality of the shelter venues. Drinking within or around the location of the shelter will result in an immediate warning or ban.

**4. No Smoking Inside the buildings**

Smoking inside the church venues is not permitted. Guests will be able to smoke in the allocated smoking area outside up until 11.00 p.m.

**5. No Offensive Weapons**

No weapons must be brought into the shelter. This includes firearms, knives and any object which could be used as a weapon.

**6. You must stay at the shelter if you have booked a bed.**

If you leave, other than to smoke in the designated area, then your bed may be offered to somebody else. If you do not arrive between 7.30 – 9.00 p.m. your bed may be offered to somebody else.

**7. Please respect the buildings and local residents**

Please leave *The Living Room* as you found it and dispose of all rubbish in the facilities provided. Please keep noise to a minimum, especially when others are sleeping.

**IF YOU ARE WILLING TO AGREE WITH THE ABOVE PLEASE**

**PRINT AND SIGN YOUR NAME BELOW.**

**Name of visitor:**

**Date:**

**Signature of visitor:**

**Booked in by Project Manager:**



**INCIDENT FORM**

Please use block capitals to complete

Date of incident:	Time of incident:
Who was present for the shift (name all staff / volunteers):	
Where was the incident?	
What type of incident?	
Who was involved? (names of visitors / staff / guests involved plus witnesses)	
What happened?	
What action was taken by shift leader?	
What was the outcome?	

Were any emergency services or additional support contacted? (include names and contact details)	
Is any follow-up action required or expected by the people involved?	
Date form completed:	Time form completed:
Name of person completing form:	Role:
Signature:	
Reviewed by Project Co-ordinator / Management Committee <input type="checkbox"/> Date: Action taken in response:	
Signature:	

## Appendix E

### Role Descriptions

#### Early Team

**Time:**

18.00 – 23.00

**Key roles and responsibilities:**

- Present for team briefing at beginning of evening
- Prepare rooms for arrival of visitors including putting up air beds, chairs etc.
- Welcome guests and ensure they feel comfortable
- Register guests as they arrive and go through brief paperwork
- Serve food
- Make hot drinks (tea, coffee)
- Clear away after food and drinks finished
- Remain awake to ensure that guests are catered for, comfortable and no issues arising.
- Deal with issues arising as indicated in training and volunteer handbook
- Pass on information about visitors and incidents to night shift (and co-ordinator if necessary)

#### Night Shift

**Time:** 22.45 – 6.30

**Key roles and responsibilities:**

- Receive information about guests and incidents from early shift
- At least 1 remain awake at all times to ensure that visitors are catered for, comfortable and no issues arising. Visitors must be visible at all times.
- Deal with issues arising as indicated in training and volunteer handbook
- Pass on information about visitors and incidents to breakfast shift (and co-ordinator if necessary)

#### Breakfast Shift

**Time:** 6.00 – 9.00

**Key roles and responsibilities:**

- Receive information about guests and incidents from night shift
- Prepare and serve simple breakfast (toast, cereals, drinks)
- Deal with issues arising as indicated in training and volunteer handbook
- Pass on information about visitors and incidents to co-ordinator and alert her to any issues next shift need to be aware of.
- Clear up and wash up after breakfast.
- Pack up bedding into separate bags for each visitor and label clearly
- Ensure visitors leave building and that area is clean and free from dangerous items.

Appendix F

**Schedule**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Shift</b>
<p><b>Team meeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before whoever is opening up the building leaves check that the following are accessible:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Emergency phone</li> <li>- Main door key</li> <li>- First aid kit</li> <li>- Sharps box</li> <li>- Flasks</li> <li>- Torches</li> <li>- Fluorescent safety vest</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Go through process for the evening</li> <li>• Discuss referrals including risks and risk management</li> <li>• For any new volunteers discuss evacuation procedure and show round hall. Talk through folder and forms.</li> <li>• Volunteer belongings put into lockers</li> <li>• Cashbox and emergency phone locked in locker / locked cupboard, team leader keeps key (in back of folder)</li> <li>• Emergency contact numbers</li> <li>• On-call contact number given to team-leader.</li> <li>• Pray (volunteers can opt out of this)</li> </ul>	18.00 – 18.30	1
<p><b>Set out hall</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get out leisure activities e.g. newspapers</li> <li>• Put out tables for food &amp; lay table</li> <li>• Chill out/TV area with lamp</li> <li>• Blow up and make beds (row of chairs in between if possible). Ensure that fire escape is kept clear.</li> <li>• Check that sharps bin and first aid kit are accessible.</li> <li>• Put up signs on toilets</li> </ul> <p><b>Prep food</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring out soup</li> <li>• Prep refreshments for arrival: tea &amp; coffee, cake</li> </ul> <p><b>Prep sign in</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put up community code</li> <li>• Put table and chairs out for registration</li> </ul>	18.30-19.30	1
<p><b>Shift roles</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome &amp; hospitality: Show round - beds,</li> </ul>	19.30 – 20.30	1

<p>toilets, fire procedure, smoking area, eating area, refreshments, &amp; activities, chat &amp; make sure guests feel comfortable etc</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registration: Go through contract and sign off, make sure guests understand code</li> <li>• Hot water to be kept topped up</li> <li>• Food to be served and eaten – visitors and volunteers eat together.</li> <li>• Put visitor belongings into locker / locked cupboard (2 volunteers supervise).</li> </ul>		
<b>Meal</b>	20.30 – 21.30	1
<b>Clear up / Guests chill</b>	21.30 – 23.00	1
<p><b>Night shift arrive</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receive briefing from early shift volunteers</li> </ul>	22.45	2
<p><b>Night shift</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early shift leave</li> <li>• Main lights out</li> <li>• Quiet time in <i>The Living Room</i> – if possible no shoes</li> <li>• Stay awake / deal with issues with at least 1 awake at any time.</li> </ul>	23.00 – 6.30	
<p><b>Breakfast shift arrive</b></p> <p><b>Breakfast preparation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Night shift leave</li> <li>• Get breakfast ready</li> <li>• Wake guests</li> </ul>	6.15 6.30	3
<p><b>Breakfast</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eat breakfast – visitors and volunteers eat together</li> </ul>	7.00	3
<p><b>Departure and tidy up</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guests leave</li> <li>• Breakfast washing up/ Begin pack away</li> <li>• Bag up bedding separately for each visitor and label clearly</li> <li>• Bedding and folder need to be kept separate and return to Project Co-ordinator needs to be arranged.</li> <li>• Check building for cleanliness and needles / discarded objects</li> <li>• Team leader writes in log book</li> </ul>	7.30 – 9.00	3

<b>Time</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Shift</b>
<b>18.00 – 18.30</b>	<b>Team meeting</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>18.30 - 19.30</b>	<b>Set out hall</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>19.30 – 20.30</b>	<b>Welcome and Registration</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>20.30 – 21.30</b>	<b>Meal</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>21.30 – 23.00</b>	<b>Clear up / Guests chill</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>22.45</b>	<b>Night shift arrive</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>23.00 – 6.15</b>	<b>Night shift</b>	
<b>6.00</b>	<b>Breakfast shift arrive</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>6.30 – 7.00</b>	<b>Breakfast preparation</b>	
<b>7.00</b>	<b>Breakfast</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>7.30 – 9.00</b>	<b>Departure and tidy up</b>	<b>3</b>